

MEETING:	PLANNING COMMITTEE
DATE:	15 MAY 2013
TITLE OF REPORT:	<p>S123565/F - ERECTION OF 12 NO. AFFORDABLE UNITS WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS, LANDSCAPING AND ALLOTMENTS AT SUFTON RISE, MORDIFORD, HEREFORDSHIRE, HR1 4EN</p> <p>For: West Mercia Housing Group per Quattro Design Architects Ltd., Imperial Chambers, Longsmith Street, Gloucester, Gloucestershire, GL1 2HT</p>
WEBSITE LINK:	http://news.herefordshire.gov.uk/housing/planning/58286.aspx?ID=123565&NoSearch=True

Date Received: 21 December 2012 Ward: Backbury Grid Ref: 357309,238666
Expiry Date: 22 March 2013
 Local Member: Councillor J Hardwick

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The application seeks planning permission for the erection of 12 affordable houses, allotments and play area on land adjoining Sufton Rise, Mordiford. Sufton Rise is a mid-twentieth century residential development located 1km north of Mordiford village on the C1292 that connects Mordiford with Dormington. There is a footpath linking Sufton Rise to Mordiford.
- 1.2 The application seeks to address the bulk of the need for affordable housing within the parish, which has been assessed as 16 units in total. This site has been chosen following an assessment of alternatives closer to the built up part of Mordiford village, which have been discounted owing to conservation constraints, access and/or flooding.
- 1.3 The site is grazing land with a field gate access onto the C1292. The site rises up to the east as does Sufton Rise. The layout is arranged around the play area and allotments, which run parallel with the boundary to Sufton Rise, with the effect that the dwellings are well removed from existing properties in Sufton Rise. On the road frontage a terrace of three bungalows is proposed. Parallel to the northern boundary and running up-slope from the entrance are two semi-detached buildings and a terrace of three properties.
- 1.4 The overall housing mix reflects the needs assessment and comprises 2 & 3 bedroom bungalows, flats and houses. The application is the result of a long consultative process with early engagement of the Parish Council and local residents. This process has helped inform the eventual layout.
- 1.5 The dwellings are traditional in appearance and constructed in brick and reconstituted stone. There is parking within the curtilage of each dwelling, but also additional parking for allotment users with some parking also available as an over-spill from Sufton Rise.

- 1.6 The site is within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The application has been screened against the Habitat Regulations, which concludes that there will be no likely significant effects on the River Wye SAC/SSSI.
- 1.7 It is proposed that the developer would equip the play area and that the Parish Council will administer the allotments. The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, Landscape Management Plan and Drainage Strategy.

2. Policies

2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraph 7 – the three dimensions to sustainable development
 Paragraph 11 – The principle in favour of sustainable development
 Chapter 6 – Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
 Chapter 7 – Requiring good design
 Chapter 8 – Promoting healthy communities
 Chapter 11 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

2.2 Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan:

S1	-	Sustainable Development
S2	-	Development Requirements
S7	-	Natural and Historic Heritage
DR1	-	Design
DR2	-	Land Use and Activity
DR3	-	Movement
DR5	-	Planning Obligations
H6	-	Housing in Smaller Settlements
H7	-	Housing in the Countryside Outside Settlements
H9	-	Affordable Housing
H10	-	Rural Exception Housing
H13	-	Sustainable Residential design
H15	-	Density
H16	-	Car Parking
H19	-	Open Space Requirements
LA1	-	Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
LA4	-	Protection of Historic Parks and Gardens
LA5	-	Protection of Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
LA6	-	Landscaping Schemes
NC1	-	Biodiversity and development
NC6	-	Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats and species
NC7	-	Compensation for loss of biodiversity
NC8	-	Habitat creation, restoration and enhancement
CF5	-	New Community Facilities

2.3 Dormington, Mordiford, Checkley and Priors Frome Parish Plan 2007.

2.4 Dormington and Mordiford Group Parish Housing Needs Survey 2009

2.5 Supplementary Planning Guidance: Provision of Affordable Housing (updated Nov 2004).

2.6 The Unitary Development Plan policies together with any relevant supplementary planning documentation can be viewed on the Council's website by using the following link:-

3. Planning History

- 3.1 Adjoining land to the east: DCCE2003/3411/F – Change of use to form children’s play area: Approved. This play area has never been equipped. The current application would, in effect, supersede this permission.

4. Consultation Summary

Statutory Consultations

- 4.1 Natural England: Natural England advises your authority that the proposal, if undertaken in strict accordance with the details submitted, is not likely to have a significant effect on the interest features for which the River Wye SAC has been classified. Natural England therefore advises that your Authority is not required to undertake an Appropriate Assessment to assess the implications of this proposal on the site’s conservation objectives.

Internal Consultees

- 4.2 Housing Needs Manager: Housing Needs and Development are in support of the application.

Detailed consultation has taken place with parishioners, residents and the parish council in relation to this scheme. Discussions have taken place relative to reducing the impact on the existing housing as well as providing a pathway and additional parking for residents of Sufton Rise to help alleviate parking issues in Sufton Rise.

A housing need survey has been carried out within the parish and a need for 16 additional dwellings was established.

These units will be built to the Homes and Communities Agency Design and Quality Standards and code 3 for the Code for Sustainable Homes. There will be a S106 ensuring that the units are affordable in perpetuity and that the dwellings are allocated to local people in housing need.

- 4.3 Transportation Manager: In the event that planning permission is granted the Transportation Manager recommends conditions. Further comments are summarised below:
Concern is expressed regarding the location and sustainability of the development which is 1.3km from the village centre and facilities such as the primary school and public house, with only a narrow footway immediately adjoining the C1262 carriageway which is de-restricted and has fast moving traffic. Consideration should be given to improving this footway.
The submitted Access Review (Hurlstone Associates) details the vehicle flows, speeds and accident record in the vicinity. No accidents have occurred as a result of turning vehicles from Sufton Rise and full visibility can be achieved for the proposed access. Whilst concerned at the addition of a further access road along this straight stretch of C1262, the Traffic Manager does not consider there to be grounds for a refusal of the application on highway safety grounds. Additional signing or alterations to existing signing will be required and this should be at the developer’s expense and can be finalised as part of the Section 38 works.

It is concluded that adequate visibility can be achieved without significant hedgerow removal although this will require careful maintenance of the existing hedge so as to maintain the splay and allow seasonal growth of the hedge without reducing visibility.

The footway on the east side of C1262, linking the development to Sufton Rise and the proposed crossing point, is narrow and should be 2.0m minimum. This footway will require piping of the existing roadside ditch. Kerb radii with C1262 should preferably be 10m.

The proposed level of parking provision is acceptable.

The separation of highway and private surface water drainage for the development, which is shown as a joint system with one attenuation feature, will not be acceptable if the roads on the development are to be adopted. I understand this matter is currently being addressed, and would be agreeable to it being conditioned if it is not resolved prior to determination.

- 4.4 Conservation Manager (Landscapes): The site is within the Wye Valley AONB. It is also included within the Old Sufton Un-registered park and garden of local historic interest. The landscape character type is principal settled farmlands. The site itself is an agricultural field, where the key characteristic is the sloping topography at the western base of the Woolhope Dome. The existing housing at Sufton Rise is out-of-keeping with the surrounding landscape and the settlement pattern of the area.

The proposed development does not work well with the existing topography, with retaining walls up to almost 2m high required to create the level platforms necessary for the houses. Whilst the introduction of housing will considerably alter the character of the site, it will always be seen in the context of the existing adjacent housing. There will not be a significant negative impact on the key characteristics of the AONB or the historic parkland. The application does include assessment of alternative sites in an outline landscape and visual impact statement, landscape details (including for the play area and allotments) and a landscape management plan – this is all necessary to demonstrate that the applicants have considered landscape character issues as required by UDP Policy LA2.

The retention of the roadside hedgerow is welcome. The Potterton Associates Ltd plan P/05 (March 2013) is suitable to the site. It includes native planting to the boundaries and amenity planting within the site. Small trees within the site, around the allotments and play area, will provide some structure and variety to the site, breaking up views of the hard landscape to the road and buildings.

Whilst I am not convinced that the proposed site layout makes the most efficient use of the topography and the allotments buffer means that there is no relationship between the existing built form of the houses at Sufton Rise and the new, random arrangement proposed. The applicants, however, have provided a wide range of information to try to overcome these issues.

- 4.5 Conservation Manager (Ecology): Although hedgerow loss is entailed in the formation of the new access, replacement is intended and the content of the Landscape Management Plan is thorough. Subject to the imposition of a condition requiring adherence to the recommendations set out in the Ecologist's report 2012, there is no objection.

5. Representations

- 5.1 Mordiford Parish Council: The Parish Council entirely supports this application having been involved from the outset. The need for the affordable housing was initiated by the parish plan process which the Parish Council initiated.

- 5.2 Five letters of objection have been received from local residents. The content is summarised as follows:

- The site is within the Area of Outstanding Beauty and should not be developed in preference to sites elsewhere;

- The development will cause traffic congestion and no thought has been given to alleviating parking concerns in Sufton Rise;
- The site is not sustainable and the footpath link to Mordiford is too narrow and too close to speeding vehicles to be used safely, particularly by those with young children;
- The proposals are not in keeping. Sufton Rise is built exclusively in red brick;
- The impact on existing properties in terms of noise and loss of view is detrimental;
- Who will allocate and manage allotments? Will they be let to local people? The potential for use by strangers, particularly with the children`s play area adjacent is undesirable;
- There are anti-social consequences of allotment use in such proximity to existing dwellings, including noise, smells, pests and bonfires;
- How will it be ensured that the houses will be allocated to locals in need? The housing needs survey was conducted in 2009. Can it be considered up-to-date?
- The development will upset the population balance and is in danger of making the Sufton Rise area larger than Mordiford, which itself has limited services;
- The school at Mordiford is full.

5.3 One letter of support has been received. The content is summarised as follows:

- The Parish Council, Housing Association and Housing Needs Officer have worked very hard to ensure the development is one which best meets the needs of the communities;
- Concerns regarding parking, traffic and conservation have been dealt with and local residents kept informed as to progress;
- The pre-planning consultation process has been very informative, with good partnership working.

5.4 The consultation responses can be viewed on the Council's website by using the following link:-

<http://news.herefordshire.gov.uk/housing/planning/searchplanningapplications.aspx>

Internet access is available at the Council's Customer Service Centres:-

www.herefordshire.gov.uk/government-citizens-and-rights/complaints-and-compliments/contact-details/?q=contact%20centre&type=suggestedpage

6. Officer's Appraisal

6.1 The application is for affordable housing to assist in meeting the identified need within the parish. The site is within open countryside forming part of the Wye Valley AONB and Old Sufton park and garden of local importance, although these designations also encompass Sufton Rise. The key issues in the determination of this application are:

- An assessment of the need for the development and its location relative to Mordiford;
- The appropriateness of the site in relation to the AONB designation (including biodiversity mitigation and compensation);
- An assessment of highway safety.

6.2 The Unitary Development Plan envisaged the delivery of a suitable proportion of affordable housing via allocated and appropriate windfall sites within Hereford, the market towns and main villages. Mordiford is not defined as a main village, but is a 'smaller settlement'. It has been established that the housing delivery policies of the Unitary Development Plan are out of date as the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, although policies H7 and H10 do make provision for the release of land for rural exceptions housing in

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Mr E Thomas on 01432 260479

instances where there is a proven, genuine and identifiable local need. With regard to the criteria of Policy H10 officers are satisfied that the local need is genuine, that local housing conditions cannot meet the need and that arrangements will be made to ensure that the housing remains available as such in perpetuity.

- 6.3 Paragraph 49 of the NPPF says that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant local plan policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.
- 6.4 Whilst officers are conscious that the site is not immediately adjacent the historic centre of Mordiford, genuine and long-term attempts have been made to identify a viable alternative closer to the village. Officers from the Housing Needs and Planning departments have been involved in this process along with the Parish Council.
- 6.5 As such, although the distance from the village is a cause for concern in the context of sustainability and reducing the need to travel by car, the new proposal should be seen within the context of the wider presumption in favour of sustainable development. In this case the site is adjoining Sufton Rise and would not be seen as isolated rural development and having regard to the available evidence officers are content that there is no other sequentially preferable location that would meet the immediate need that has been identified in the parish.
- 6.6 The presence of the existing residential development at Sufton Rise also acts to reduce the negative landscape impact as regards the AONB designation. Insofar as Policy LA1 is concerned the development can reasonably be described as small-scale and necessary to facilitate the social well-being of the area through the provision of affordable housing. Although the development will clearly alter the existing landscape character, officers are satisfied that landscaping proposals will be sufficient to adequately mitigate the effect and will result in some enhanced biodiversity value. Accordingly the proposal is considered to be in accordance with LA1 and paragraph 116 of the NPPF and the Policies, LA2, LA5, LA6, NC1, NC6, NC7 and NC8.
- 6.7 The Transportation Manager has made some observations regarding the sustainability of the site in location terms and has also set out conditions required to make the development acceptable in terms of the site access and drainage of surface water. Officers acknowledge that the site is over 1km from Mordiford, but conclude that the need for affordable housing in the parish outweighs these concerns regarding location. Although restoration and potential widening of the footpath linking Sufton Rise to the village would be beneficial, it is beyond the scope of this application to address this deficiency.
- 6.8 The Transportation Manager is content that the proposed access from the C1262 is acceptable and would provide a safe means of access onto the highway in accordance with UDP Policy DR3.

Other Matters

- 6.9 Natural England is content that the foul drainage strategy should mitigate likely significant effects on the River Wye/Lugg Special Area of Conservation. A condition is recommended to ensure that the stated approach to drainage is that undertaken on site.
- 6.10 The allotments and play areas have been included upon request from the Parish Council and allocation of the allotments will be administered by them in accordance with NALC guidelines. They are intended as a parish facility with preference given to those persons who have already registered an interest in taking one on. Likewise parking spaces for the allotments and overspill from Sufton Rise will also be administered by the Parish Council. With this local management in place officers are content that the allotments can co-exist with existing

housing without undue detriment to living conditions in a manner consistent with Policy DR2(4). The opportunity to provide allotments are also considered to underpin the objectives set out at Chapter 8 of the NPPF in that the provision of new community facilities can assist in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. It is also clear that this aspect of the proposal has the benefit of long-standing community support.

- 6.11 A legal agreement will be required in order to ensure that the dwellings are occupied in accordance with the Council's adopted eligibility criteria, with preference given to people in housing need living within the parish in the first instance before cascading out to surrounding parishes.

Conclusions

- 6.12 The provision of affordable housing to meet genuine long-term need is supported by the Unitary Development Plan and although a site immediately adjoining Mordiford would have been preferred from the perspective of reducing the need to travel, officers are satisfied that there are no other available sites capable of meeting the need. In this instance, therefore, the provision of affordable housing to meet a parish-wide need is a material consideration to which significant weight can be attached. Likewise the proposals would realise other community-led aspirations around the provision of allotments and a children's play area. The proposal has been subject of wide-ranging local consultation and has the full support of the Parish Council and it is they who would assume management responsibility for the allotments and parking spaces. In this respect, although there is a degree of conflict with UDP Policy H10, officers conclude that the positive benefits to be derived from the scheme outweigh this conflict and the recommendation is one of approval in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework as expressed in chapters 6, 7 and 8.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. **A01 Time limit for commencement (full permission)**
2. **B07 Section 106 Agreement**
3. **C01 Samples of external materials**
4. **G10 Landscaping scheme**
5. **G11 Landscaping scheme – implementation**
6. **I18 Scheme of foul drainage disposal**
7. **The recommendations set out in the ecologist's report dated December 2012 should be followed. Prior to commencement of development, an ecological enhancement scheme based on these recommendations shall be submitted to the Local Planning authority for written approval. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.**
Reason: To ensure that all species are protected having regard to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and Policies NC1, NC6 and NC7 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.
8. **I20 Scheme of surface water drainage**
9. **H03 Visibility splays (2.4m x 210m)**
10. **H09 Driveway gradient**
11. **H11 Parking - estate development (more than one house)**
12. **H18 On site roads - submission of details (including outfall arrangements and**

piping of the roadside ditch)

- 13. H21 Wheel washing
- 14. H27 Parking for site operatives
- 15. H19 On site roads - phasing
- 16. I51 - Details of slab levels
- 17. I55 - Site Waste Management
- 18. The allotments and play area hereby approved shall be completed in accordance with details to be approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to the first occupation of any of the dwellings hereby approved.

Reason: In order to ensure that the community facilities are available for use so as to comply with Policy CF5 of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan.

Reason for Approval

- 1. The application has been considered with regard to ‘saved’ Unitary Development Plan Policies S1, S2, S7, DR1, DR2, DR3, DR5, H6, H7, H9, H10, H13, H15, H16, H19, LA1, LA4, LA5, LA6, NC1, NC7, NC8 and CF5 together with guidance laid down in the National Planning Policy Framework. The development promotes the provision of affordable housing and other community facilities to meet a long-established local need in the context of a current lack of housing land supply. The development, which is within the Wye Valley Outstanding Natural Beauty, is considered small-scale and necessary to facilitate the economic and social well-being of the designated area and its communities, would provide appropriate mitigation and compensation in relation to biodiversity and is in the public interest. Vehicular access from the C1262 is considered appropriate in accordance with Policy DR3, whereas the development would not, in the opinion of the local planning authority, adversely affect the living conditions of existing occupants of Sufton Rise. The local planning authority concludes that the development accords with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set down in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informatives:

- 1. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against planning policy and any other material considerations. Negotiations in respect of matters of concern with the application (as originally submitted) have resulted in amendments to the proposal. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 2. HN10 No drainage to discharge to highway
- 3. HN08 Section 38 Agreement & Drainage details
- 4. HN05 Works within the highway
- 5. HN24 Drainage other than via highway system

Decision:

Notes:

Background Papers

Internal departmental consultation replies.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Mr E Thomas on 01432 260479



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APPLICATION NO: S/123565/F

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